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COG Chairman Roger Berliner Expresses Strong Support For Metro Repair Plan

Says GM's Decision Answers Region's Call for Bold Leadership

WASHINGTON, D.C.,—In the wake of WMATA General Manager's release of his draft plan to address Metro safety and reliability issues, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Chairman Roger Berliner offered his strong support for the GM's plan.

"General Manager Wiedefeld's draft plan to comprehensively address Metro's core issues of safety and reliability over the course of the next 12 months is 'tough medicine' for tough times," said Chairman Berliner, who also serves as Chair of the Montgomery County Council's Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee. "The entire region has suffered because of the failure over many, many years to make the hard decisions necessary to maintain the system. The consequences of inaction are now crystal clear. As a result, our regional leaders have asked the new WMATA leadership team, led by the General Manager, to do what is necessary to fix it. Mr. Wiedefeld is answering that call with a 12 month plan to provide safe and reliable service."

According to WMATA, the repair plan will consist of 15 areas of track that require extensive work, resulting in 24/7 single-tracking for varying lengths of time. These "surges" will take place on all lines except Silver, and will include stations throughout the system. The work will consist of a comprehensive rehabilitation of the rails, with rail ties, fasteners, switches, and electrical cables being replaced.

"Executing this plan will not be easy. There is no question that single tracking will seriously inconvenience many already-frustrated riders. But stretching this work out over many years would create more serious impacts for riders and the region. The safety issues we are experiencing today would worsen while we wait. Our local governments and the federal government must work together to provide interim adjustments, such as additional buses, telecommuting, and other measures. The vitality of our region depends on our working together to support Metro's efforts to provide safe and reliable service.

"Metro was once a world-class system, and I believe that General Manager Wiedefeld's decisive action plan is an important step forward in reclaiming that status," added Chairman Berliner.

It is expected that the 12 month safety and reliability work will begin in June.

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, with its partners at the Board of Trade, has made developing a long-term strategy to address WMATA's funding and other challenges a key focus of its efforts this year. COG's Board of Directors will discuss the state of Metro's finances at its meeting next Wednesday, May 11 with WMATA Board Chair and District of Columbia Councilmember Jack Evans.

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The Council of Governments is an independent, nonprofit association where area leaders address regional issues affecting the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia.

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